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**Summary record of the 42nd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 November 1997, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Busacca ..... (Italy)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

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**(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** (*continued*) (A/52/36 and 182)

**(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** (*continued*) (A/52/36 and 182)

1. **Mr. Al-Sudairy** (Saudi Arabia), after recalling commitments undertaken by the United Nations in the area of human rights, said that international cooperation was the basic condition for achieving the universality of human rights, which could only be realized through understanding, studying and absorbing the cultures and particularities of diverse societies. He pointed out that, first, certain national principles transcended international standards. Second, international principles of human rights could not be applied without taking into account the cultural and religious characteristics of each society. Third, the basic right of all peoples was the right to exist, and to have their own language, culture and religion, through which they expressed their sovereignty and principles. Fourth, it was important not to distort the original concept of human rights by invoking it indiscriminately. Fifth, it was necessary to recognize the evolutionary nature of international standards of human rights, which had to adapt to change. Sixth, there was growing acceptance of human rights on the part of developing countries, and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights should not impose restrictions on the countries to which it provided technical assistance. Seventh, national characteristics should not be used as a pretext for violations of human rights. Eighth and finally, the United Nations system should not be an instrument of anti-religious propaganda. In that connection, Saudi Arabia strongly supported the decision of the Human Rights Committee (1997/125), taken without a vote, to request the deletion of a shocking reference to the Holy Koran contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1997/71).

2. Human rights in Saudi Arabia had moral and religious dimensions that were protected by Saudi Arabian law, and justice was applied in the spirit of articles 26, 36 and 37 of the basic law of the Kingdom. Moreover, Saudi Arabia had recently become a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

3. The Government of Saudi Arabia was making every effort to protect society against acts leading to discrimination and violence, and took pride in having attained security, stability and prosperity. The foreign workers flooding into the country had the same rights as Saudi Arabian citizens in all areas. With the approach of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community should adopt an objective attitude towards human rights.

4. Returning to the charges made by the delegation that had spoken on behalf of the European Union, he cited paragraph 48 of the report on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance (A/52/477), which had praised the attitude of his country.

5. **Mr. Jong Myong Hak** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) noted that the end of the cold war had changed neither attitudes nor policies in the area of human rights. The protection of those rights was increasingly a pretext for encroachments on the sovereignty of States. Exacerbated by wars and conflicts, the social problems that afflicted developed as well as developing countries were also at the root of serious human rights violations.

6. To achieve the goals that had been set, the antagonisms that had resulted from the cold war must be eradicated. That in turn would require that human rights should be depoliticized, since human rights were the sovereign right of the State, and the sovereignty of any State was the life of the State itself. Human rights must in no case be made to

serve political, economic or commercial interests in order to justify an encroachment on national sovereignty, and subordinating economic cooperation and trade to human rights was an encroachment on the sovereignty of developing countries. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea urged the international community to promote the right to development as defined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

7. The protection and promotion of human rights in a given country depended on the nature of its political system. Moreover, just as the existence of an individual could not be conceived of apart from society and the community, so the basic rights of an individual were inconceivable without the basic collective rights. Therefore, a political system based on collectivism guaranteed maximum respect for human rights. In such a system, which constituted the fundamental ideology of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the people were masters of State policy and were at once the creators and the beneficiaries of economic and cultural wealth. The Korean people would never tolerate the slightest encroachment on the political and economic system that they had freely chosen. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would continue to uphold their leader's benign policies guaranteeing the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people and safeguarding national independence.

8. He concluded by saying that the Government of his country would actively join in the efforts of the international community to promote human rights in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

9. **Mr. Bull** (Liberia), speaking on agenda items 112 (b) and (e), noted that the High Commissioner for Human Rights, inspired by the principles of impartiality, non-selectivity and objectivity, was working to establish a global partnership to address the full range of human rights, including the right to development. She had also mentioned innovative measures and approaches that she planned to adopt in order to better promote and protect human rights. His delegation noted with pleasure that, thanks to the decision of the Secretary-General to have the High Commissioner participate in establishing the programme of work, human rights would henceforth be better integrated into the Organization's programme of work. It was also commendable that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Centre for Human Rights were to be consolidated, thus ensuring a more dynamic implementation of human rights programmes.

10. It was gratifying that the High Commissioner had called on international financial institutions to show greater interest in promoting the rights of people in impoverished countries; those people constituted one fifth of the world's population.

11. Like other developing countries, Liberia had consistently supported the right to development of all peoples as an integral part of their fundamental human rights; it therefore fully subscribed to the Declaration on the Right to Development, and called for its speedy implementation.

12. At the end of seven years of civil war, a constitutional civilian Government had been installed following general presidential and legislative elections held on 19 July 1997 with electoral assistance from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the donor community. Observance of the rule of law and respect for human rights had been made a cornerstone of the new Government's domestic policy. In order to foster national reconciliation, members of the opposition had been included in the Government, with the assurance that there would be no reprisals against anyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion or social status.

13. On 27 October 1997, the President had established a national human rights commission, an independent body consisting of five members who were not involved in any political activities. Among other things, the commission would investigate alleged violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, establish a human rights education programme, and conduct fact-finding hearings before the cases went to court. It would also liaise with the Centre for Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, Amnesty International and other governmental and non-governmental bodies. Additionally, the post of Deputy Minister for Human Rights had been created within the Ministry of Justice.

14. Liberia was preparing to ratify the two international human rights covenants and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Government would also organize, in conjunction with the National Human Rights Commission, local non-governmental human rights bodies, the media and educational institutions, programmes in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

15. It would be only fair for the international community to help Liberia to rebuild its economic infrastructure, to strengthen its institutions, particularly the judicial system and the police, and to assist the reintegration into civil society of refugees, internally displaced persons and former

combatants, especially child soldiers. Such assistance would help to consolidate peace and stability in Liberia.

16. **Mr. Baby** (India) said that his delegation particularly appreciated the report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan (A/52/493) and the report on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance (A/52/477). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights had served as a standard in the definition of fundamental rights in the Indian Constitution.

17. The issue was not the universality of human rights but the universal acceptance of those rights. Consequently, alternative approaches should be explored more fully, taking account of the particular characteristics of each country. For the developing countries, especially those which had been colonized, the right to development encapsulated all fundamental rights, and meant that the wrongs they had suffered could be redressed, in order to ensure a better future. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on the Declaration on the Right to Development, particularly in the light of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to development was an integral part of fundamental human rights, and most closely expressed the aspirations of developing countries.

18. His delegation considered that the politicization of human rights and the tendency of the majority of countries to assume the role of custodians of human rights constituted an absurd approach; many of the countries which took it upon themselves to produce reports on the situation of human rights should first examine the situation in their own territory.

19. Human rights monitoring was indeed essential for the promotion and protection of those rights, but the good faith of monitors was sometimes open to question. A distinction should therefore be made between monitoring by experts drawn from different legal systems, based on the international instruments to which the States were parties, and monitoring activities by diplomatic and political mechanisms.

20. The behavioural approach of Western countries to human rights was superficial and therefore questionable. The solution did not lie in the enforcement of standards or in punitive action; on the contrary, democracy, development and a culture of tolerance should be promoted. The conceptualization of operational activities, as described by the delegation which had spoken on behalf of the European Union, should be spelt out and examined carefully; ideological and developmental factors which led to worrying situations must not be ignored.

21. It was imperative that a body of law on human rights abuses should be elaborated, but there were several situations for which such an approach was ineffectual because they were not situations arising from particular kinds of behaviour. That was the case with extremist ideologies; the case of the Taliban, described in the two reports (A/52/493 and A/52/477), demonstrated that, while bad behaviour could be countered by good law and effective administration, religious intolerance called for a much more complex approach, including strategies to counter intolerance.

22. Similarly, there was a tendency to confuse symptoms of underdevelopment, such as child labour, with wilful violations of human rights. Arguing that a Government capable of managing public affairs was a Government capable of looking after the needs of its citizens, the international community attached too much importance to assistance in the area of good governance. That reflected a reluctance to address the root causes of underdevelopment, particularly through structural reforms at the global level, technology transfers and improved access to trade. Democracy, development and human rights were a triad, and his delegation believed that emphasis should be placed on the right to development in United Nations human rights programmes. The role of non-governmental organizations in the promotion of human rights should be recognized, as should the role of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, which were particularly effective in India.

23. It was regrettable that human rights machinery, particularly the Centre for Human Rights, was seen as reflecting the interests of certain countries. The Centre should be impartial, objective and even-handed, but the developing countries often saw it as a Western "fortress", which could not but undermine its credibility. More constructive interaction and increased transparency between the Centre and the developing countries should be encouraged, and more equitable geographical representation was needed in its staffing in order for the Centre to garner universal recognition and support.

24. **Mrs. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine), speaking on agenda item 112 (b), said that, since the progress of human rights was essential to the progress of any society, the United Nations must elaborate additional specific programmes and activities for the promotion and protection of those rights.

25. The observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would begin on 10 December 1998; together with the World Conference on Human Rights and other international human rights

instruments, the Declaration formed the basis for combating the violation of those rights, and for the establishment of peace, prosperity and justice in the world, as stressed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A programme for reform" (A/51/950).

26. With a view to achieving the objectives of the World Conference on Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action proposed concrete methods and mechanisms for monitoring the situation of peoples living under foreign occupation, in accordance with, *inter alia*, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (12 August 1949). The Palestinian territory occupied by Israel was the scene of collective violations of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people that ranked among the worst in recent human history: foreign occupation, deprivation of the right to self-determination, various forms of collective punishment, confiscation of land and natural resources, illegal establishment of settlements. Other human rights violations were perpetrated at the individual level: detention, imprisonment, summary executions and obstruction of the freedom of movement and means of livelihood.

27. Such practices, which threatened the peace process, would be addressed by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (agenda item 87), and by the Commission on Human Rights during its discussion of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Her delegation regretted Israel's persistent refusal to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and the failure of the peace process to advance the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people remained committed to the peace process; that alone would enable it to exercise its inalienable rights and lead to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

28. **Mr. Fernández Palacios** (Cuba), speaking on agenda items 112 (b) and (d), said that 1998 would mark the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year evaluation of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, two landmark events which, he hoped, would give rise to a critical and in-depth review of the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered.

29. The Universal Declaration, a progressive and altruistic instrument elaborated in response to the horrors of the Second World War, had been adopted at a time when two thirds of humankind were still living under the yoke of colonialism and neo-colonialism and when apartheid was becoming evident in southern Africa. It had led to the progressive development and recognition of the full range of fundamental rights and freedoms and had facilitated the struggle of many peoples for independence, development and peace. It was now time to define the challenges that could be taken up during the next millennium on the basis of the Declaration.

30. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, was another milestone in the progressive development and codification of human rights. The recognition of the right to development as a universal and inalienable human right had doubtless been an extremely important victory for developing countries, even though its implementation to date still had far to go. The recognition of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all rights of the human being, and of the importance of various historical, cultural and religious traditions had also been among the major topics discussed at the Conference. The five-year evaluation of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action should lead to the strengthening of international cooperation in the field of human rights, and, in particular, to the depoliticization of those rights and the adaptation of United Nations human rights machinery by simplifying and strengthening it.

31. Cuba would contribute to those two processes and would make every effort to promote a new definition of a charter of human rights for the next millennium, taking into account not only the Universal Declaration and the International Covenants but also the Declaration on the Right to Development.

32. **Mrs. Fritsche** (Liechtenstein) said that, for Liechtenstein, which had been a Member of the United Nations since 1990 and would soon become a party to the six core international human rights instruments, the work of the Organization had served as a catalyst for the promotion and protection of human rights. That was best illustrated by the advancement of women: the Fourth World Conference on Women and Liechtenstein's subsequent accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had enhanced awareness of its problems in that area and increased the involvement of civil society and the competent administrative and legislative bodies.

33. Under the terms of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the concept of human rights must be taken into account during the consideration of all major United Nations activities, particularly those relating to international peace and security.

34. As it prepared to observe the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 within the

framework of the Human Rights Year, Liechtenstein believed that certain initiatives should be taken at the intergovernmental level in order to ensure that the rights laid down in the Declaration were fully respected and to determine future needs and challenges in the human rights area.

35. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had also become indispensable references for the consideration of human rights issues. The establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was a concrete result of the Vienna Conference and Liechtenstein hoped that the Organization would find ways to assist the new High Commissioner, financially and politically, in fulfilling her extremely difficult tasks.

36. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court would also take place during the Human Rights Year. The Court should make it possible to break the vicious cycle of serious human rights violations and impunity.

37. The debate on human rights issues did not always reflect willingness on the part of the international community to work together on the basis of common standards, because of national bias or the prioritization of certain human rights over others. Still, it was the Governments that bore primary responsibility for improving the human rights situation in the world; Liechtenstein was making and would continue to make every effort to achieve that goal by co-sponsoring the resolutions introduced in the Committee.

38. **Mr. Farrukh** (Pakistan), speaking on agenda items 112 (b) and (e) said that, despite the progress achieved by the United Nations, the international community, non-governmental organizations and civil society since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights violations were still a common occurrence in many parts of the world. Thus, in addition to the humanitarian crisis in the Great Lakes region, which was a matter of concern to the international community, Bosnia and Herzegovina had furnished one of the cruellest examples of such violations; that was why his delegation fully endorsed the Dayton Peace Agreement.

39. In South Asia, the state of Jammu and Kashmir had been facing a serious human rights crisis since 1989, when its people, inspired by the wave of freedom sweeping through Eastern Europe at the time, had rallied to demand recognition of their inalienable right to self-determination, in pursuance of the resolutions of the Security Council and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan.

40. India had responded to that peaceful movement by deploying security forces and imposing draconian laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Public Safety Act, killing 60,000 men, women and children in eight years, and wounding and disabling thousands more. In addition to custodial deaths, extrajudicial killings and summary executions, which were daily occurrences, 32,000 Kashmiri political activists were in jail.

41. International human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch, had catalogued the human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir, and a Srinagar-based research institution had published a report on the issue. Another report issued by a women's fact-finding team, had documented the use of rape of Kashmiri women and girls as an instrument of war, with little reaction from the ruling elite.

42. In order to deceive the international community, India claimed that it was only monitoring the smuggling across the border of material for the Kashmiri activists. However, the line of control there was one of the most militarized areas in the world; furthermore, since 1992, Pakistan had been proposing the deployment of neutral international observers there or an increase in the number of United Nations observers in order to verify India's allegations. India continued to reject that proposal.

43. India also accused Kashmiri freedom fighters of terrorism, whereas it was in fact the Kashmiris who were victims of State-sponsored terrorism perpetrated by the Indian occupation forces.

44. The human rights crisis in Jammu and Kashmir was directly and inescapably linked to the denial of the Kashmiri people's inalienable right to self-determination. The international community must therefore use its influence with India to persuade it to immediately cease its violations of human rights in the region and to ensure the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, without allowing itself to be hamstrung by political, economic or commercial considerations in South Asia.

45. **Ms. Hadar** (Israel), speaking on agenda item 112 (d), said that, with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1998 would be a historic moment for human rights.

46. While the great achievements in human rights education and legislation as well as the growing involvement of civil society were welcome, an objective review of the current situation should also be conducted. One outstanding question concerned the harmonization of international

human rights law with national legal systems. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many international instruments, working groups and special rapporteurs had contributed to the establishment of an international legal regime for the promotion and protection of human rights. Yet many of the countries that had signed and ratified such instruments had been either unable or unwilling to implement them, claiming that they were incompatible with the practices or beliefs of their societies. However, the existence of cultural and religious particularities did not dispense States from their duty to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

47. Nor should Governments use State sovereignty as a pretext for preventing scrutiny by the international community of the way in which they protected human rights.

48. In his speech to the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General had stressed that human rights were not a luxury concern imposed by the West, and had called upon African leaders to respect those rights.

49. Systematic violations of human rights still occurred, and although the media focused mostly on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, no country could claim to be free from shortcomings in the area of human rights.

50. It must be acknowledged that remarkable progress had been made in the field of human rights. Individuals, non-governmental organizations and legislators had laid both the ideological and practical foundations that were crucial to the advancement of human rights; the challenge now was to ensure that that new language was spoken throughout the world.

51. The High Commissioner for Human Rights should see to it that human rights forums were not used for political purposes and should endeavour to harmonize the various conceptions of human rights currently prevailing in the world.

52. **Mr. Diseko** (South Africa) said that in order to break away from a difficult past, the people of South Africa had in 1996 adopted a new constitution based on democracy and social justice, which guaranteed fundamental human rights – freedom, dignity, equality and non-discrimination.

53. Parliament had enacted the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act and established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was doing valuable work.

54. Following the transformation of the various branches of government based on United Nations human rights instruments, his Government had established a ministerial committee responsible for examining such instruments before the country acceded to or ratified them. However, it should be noted that the Constitution took due account of human rights, many of which were to be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

55. The Government had also established various national institutions and enacted legislation to guarantee their independence and impartiality, and to ensure that they were subject only to the Constitution and to the law.

56. In addition to an electoral commission and a constitutional court, the Government had established a Human Rights Commission with a mandate to investigate and report on the observance of human rights, take steps to secure appropriate redress where such rights had been violated, carry out research and educate the public on human rights. It had already investigated allegations of racism and was currently trying to racially integrate schools.

57. The functions of the Commission for Gender Equality included investigating, advising and reporting on any issues that fell within its mandate.

58. A Bill of Rights, the result of a long process of consultations with all strata of society, particularly civil society, was also included in the Constitution. The Bill bound the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and all organs of State, and protected the dignity, equality and freedom of every South African.

59. The National Economic Development and Labour Council, a tripartite body composed of government, labour and business representatives, was one of the socio-economic institutions that promoted good governance and thus human rights. Women's groups, youth organizations and various cultural and religious bodies also contributed to the vibrancy of the democratic process.

60. Since the right to development was an important component of human rights, the South African Government had established a socio-economic rehabilitation and development strategy to give that right meaning. The aims of the Reconstruction and Development Program and the Growth Economic and Reconstruction Strategy were to give the people access to water, sanitation, shelter and health care, and to promote the sustainable development of human resources.

61. The most recent meeting of South Africa's heads of missions had outlined the guiding principles of the country's new foreign policy, namely, the promotion of human rights, democracy, justice, respect for international law in the

conduct of relations between nations, and regional and international cooperation.

62. **Mr. Minoves-Triquell** (Andorra) said that his country had clung to individual liberties and the tenets of tolerance for over 1,000 years, having been undoubtedly helped in that respect by the smallness and isolation of its territory, where everyone knew everyone else and where the collective good was achieved by the cooperation of all, which was translated into individual benefits for all. Since the fifteenth century, it had had a parliament and had so well respected the liberties of others that, in the twentieth century, it had been a shelter of freedom for individuals fleeing intolerance, torture and death. The Andorran example also demonstrated that it was possible to achieve human rights and democracy in poor countries and remote communities.

63. Human rights were now becoming more of a necessity for the planet. By respecting the rights of others at the individual level, aggressiveness at the level of the nation-State was much less likely. Political scientists argued that democracies, which were the depositories of realistic respect for human rights, did not fight democracies. Thanks to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fiftieth anniversary of which would be celebrated in 1998, the world had a written international standard indicating the path to be followed.

64. The argument that economic and social rights took precedence over individual liberties was a fallacy, as there was no reason why one should exclude the other. After all, even in the developing world, countries which had embraced democracy and human rights were doing no worse in terms of development than those which had opted for authoritarian regimes. Countries which styled themselves as defenders of human rights, such as Andorra, which had shown itself to be such by having voted for and sponsored certain resolutions, should go beyond the status quo. In order to build better societies, tolerance should be fostered at every level and human rights should be taught at school, as stipulated in article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Much still remained to be done in that area, however.

65. In conclusion, he commended the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the work already accomplished and assured her of Andorra's active support.

66. **Mr. Kpotsra** (Togo) said he hoped that, in view of her experience of State affairs, her knowledge of related human rights questions and her willingness to address such questions fully, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would successfully overcome the difficulties of her task. The activities relating to the establishment and strengthening of national institutions which she had carried out in 1996 and 1997 at the request of Governments (A/52/468) demonstrated the keen interest now being shown in those questions. Despite the standards, rules of conduct and mechanisms provided for in international human rights instruments, gross violations of all types persisted. It was only to be hoped that the forthcoming celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action would make it possible to assess the extent to which States had fulfilled their obligations.

67. In order to promote a better world, it was crucial to strengthen human rights education and information, which would further the emergence of a democratic culture. His delegation welcomed the activities carried out by the United Nations in the context of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and stressed that the education campaign in question should be targeted at rural inhabitants in the developing countries, who were often poorly informed.

68. Driven by that belief, his Government had introduced human rights education at the second and third levels of general education. A national human rights commission also organized regular training seminars for the public at large. Established on 9 June 1997, the commission was an independent State institution that was subject only to the Constitution and law. Consisting of 17 members elected by the National Assembly, its function was to promote and protect human rights and to ascertain the facts concerning reported violations. It could recommend legislation or give opinions to public authorities.

69. The Togolese Constitution, adopted on 14 October 1992, clearly reaffirmed the country's will to construct a body of law which respected fundamental human rights, public freedoms and human dignity. Prompted by that will, Togo had acceded to most international human rights instruments, the provisions of which formed an integral part of the Constitution, in accordance with article 50 thereof.

70. With a view to fulfilling its obligations and submitting periodic reports to the various monitoring bodies, Togo had established an interministerial committee to draft such periodic reports, comprising representatives from the ministries concerned with human rights issues. It had also established a national commission to harmonize legislation, whose task was to explore ways of incorporating the rules contained in the various international human rights instruments into domestic law. Moreover, as part of its democratization effort, it had established a constitutional

court, a supreme council of justice and a high authority for audiovisual and communication matters. It has also altered the structure of the Supreme Court.

71. Togo welcomed the support which it received from the United Nations Centre for Human Rights with a view to strengthening its body of law. A joint project, launched in April 1997, would be concluded in 1998. Various training courses had also been organized in the country for officials and employees of the Department for Human Rights and the National Human Rights Commission, as well as for journalists and members of the security forces.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*